

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 02081 311727Z
ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 EA-10 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 EUR-12
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R 311407Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0578

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 2081

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, CH, XA
SUBJECT: PRC AMBASSADOR IN GABORONE

REF: STATE 198321

1. PRC AMBASSADOR TO BOTSWANA CHAO CHENG-YI PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS TWO YEARS AGO (SEPTEMBER 2, 1975). HE WAS APPOINTED PRIOR TO DEATH OF MAO AND HAS REMAINED AT HIS POST THROUGH THE RISE OF HUA KUO-FENG AND THE "GANG OF FOUR" CONTROVERSY. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION CONCERNING HIS POSITION IN FOREIGN MINISTRY HEIRARCHY OR NATURE OF HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HUA KUO-FENG OR HUANG HUA.

2. AFRICAN EXPERTISE. CHAO CHENG-YI HAS SOME EXPERIENCE IN AND KNOWLEDGE OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS. HE HAS SERVED AS CHAIRMAN OF AFRO-ASIAN PEOPLE'S SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE IN PEKING AND AS PRC AMBASSADOR TO SIERRE LEONE. DURING CONVERSATION WITH DCM AT DIPLOMATIC RECEPTION, HE IMPLIED THAT HE PREFERS WEST AFRICA TO HIS CURRENT POST IN BOTSWANA.

3. ATTITUDE TOWARD U.S. IN HIS INFREQUENT CONTACTS WITH OFFICIAL AMERICANS, CHAO CHENG-YI HAS BEEN CORDIAL BUT GUARDED IN CONVERSATION. HE USES INTERPRETER WHEN CONVERSING WITH ALL ENGLISH SPEAKERS, ALTHOUGH GOB POLICE SPECIAL BRANCH PERSONNEL BELIEVE THAT HE PROBABLY SPEAKS
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AT LEAST SOME ENGLISH. HE RECENTLY TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO ENGAGE ME IN CONVERSATION TO EXPLAIN (IN FRIENDLY MANNER) THAT HE APPRECIATED MY INVITATION TO THE FOURTH OF JULY RECEPTION BUT COULD NOT ATTEND UNTIL THERE WAS "NORMALIZATION" OF RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. HE ALSO WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO EXPRESS CONDOLENCES ON THE ACCIDENTAL DEATH LAST APRIL 6 OF DCM ALBERTI'S

WIFE.

4. HEALTH/PERSONALITY. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION FROM OUR CONTACTS WITH HIM OR FROM SPECIAL BRANCH THAT CHAO CHENG-YI IS NOT IN GOOD HEALTH. HE HAS ADOPTED RELATIVELY LOW PROFILE SINCE HIS ARRIVAL, CONFINING HIMSELF PRIMARILY TO STATEMENTS STRESSING SIMILARITY OF SOME PRC AND GOB FOREIGN POLICY POSITIONS. CHAO CHENG-YI'S LOW-KEY STYLE HAS EARNED HIM AND CHINESE EMBASSY RELATIVELY HIGH MARKS WITH GOB, PARTICULARLY WHEN COMPARED WITH ADVERSE REACTION OF MANY BATSWANA TO HIGH-HANDED AND OCCASIONALLY IRRITATING ATTITUDES AND ACTIVITIES OF SOVIET CHARGE AND MISSION STAFF. THE PRC AMBASSADOR APPEARS TO KEEP A CAREFUL EYE ON THE SOVIET CHARGE BUT IS NOT RIGID OR DOGMATIC, I.E. HE DOES NOT SYSTEMATICALLY SHUN CONTACT WITH HIM. FROM HIS GENERAL OPEN, FRIENDLY, RATHER GREGARIOUS MANNER, WE WOULD GUESS THAT AMBASSADOR CHAO CHENG-YI IS NATURALLY INCLINED TO BE REASONABLE RATHER THAN DOGMATIC AND THAT HE IS UNCOMFORTABLE WITH MINDLESS MAO-IST RHETORIC.

5. PHOTOGRAPHS. EMBASSY IS POUCHING BEST AVAILABLE PHOTOGRAPH OF CHAO CHENG-YI, WHICH APPEARED IN DAILY NEWS OF MAY 28, 1976. WE ARE ATTEMPTING DISCREETLY TO OBTAIN PICTURE OF CHINESE EMBASSY AND WILL FORWARD IF OUR PLANS SUCCEED. PRC EMBASSY OCCUPIES BUILDING WHICH
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WAS PREVIOUSLY ROC EMBASSY.
NORLAND

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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